

*Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks*  
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**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST**

**PART I. Purpose of and Need for Action**

**1. Project Title:** Spec Willis Trap Club – Colstrip, MT

**2. Type of Proposed Action:** (1) Improvement of skeet and sporting clays ranges  
(2) Make needed roof repairs and replacements  
(3) Install a handicap ramp

**3. Location Affected by Proposed Action:** The Spec Willis Trap Club also known as the Colstrip Trap Club, is located in Rosebud County Montana and the property is leased from PPL Montana. The property description, as per the lease agreement, is: “All that part of the S1/2NE ¼ of Section 28, located West of the Highway, North of the roadway leading to the surge pond and South and East of the fences which provide the other boundaries; this tract of land contains 15 acres more or less.” PPI has also given an additional unused contiguous 45 acres to the club for its use. The range is located directly NE of Castle Rock Lake and NW of the town of Colstrip. Access to the range is west off of Highway 39 (See Figure 1).

**4. Agency Authority for the Proposed Action:** MCA87-1-276 through 87-1-279 (Legislative established policies and procedures for the establishment and improvement of shooting ranges) MCA87-2-105 (Departmental authority to expend funds to provide training in the safe handling and use of firearms and safe hunting practices). The 2007 Montana Legislature has authorized funding for the establishment of a Shooting Range Development Program providing financial assistance for the development of shooting ranges for public purposes. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks has responsibility for the administration of the program, including the necessary guidelines and procedures governing applications for funding assistance under the program.

**5. Need for the Action(s):** Upgrade facilities increasing recreational opportunities, handicapped accessibility, and enhancing safety and security (See paragraph 10).

**6. Objectives for the Action(s):** Upgrade skeet and sporting clays ranges with 2 new automatic trap machines and 3 new sporting clays machines. Additional objective is to stabilize the sloped edges of the skeet range, making it safer for shooters and for mowing the slopes. Replace deteriorated gun racks. Replace deteriorated shingle roof on the clubhouse and add concrete roofs to the trap houses. Make clubhouse handicap accessible with a new ramp (See para. 2 & 5 above).

## 7. Maps:



Figure 1 - Aerial Map showing Spec Willis Trap Club.

**8. Project Size: Estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected:** Range is approximately 15 acres, but improvements are limited to a much smaller area within the broader area of the range.

**9. Affected Environment (A brief description of the affected area of the proposed project):** The area was formerly pasture land, but had been idle at the time of the acquisition for the trap club. The Spec Willis Trap Club also known as the Colstrip Trap Club. The immediate area is a recreational area with the trap club in the north central portion this

area. The trap club is bordered on the east by the Colstrip Gun range, directly to the south and curving up the west side the main access road from Highway 39. Castle Rock Lake Recreation area is below the road and directly to the south, with Castle Rock Lake below it and to the southwest, and the Colstrip Archery Range across the road from the trap club to the West.

**10. Description of Project:**

**(1) Skeet and Sporting Clays Ranges:** To upgrade both the skeet and sporting clays ranges two new skeet machines and three new sporting clays machines will be purchased. Pour five 3'X4' concrete pads. The sporting clays machines will be mounted on carts and set on the concrete pads. Fill material will be hauled and placed on the back slope from the skeet range to stabilize and reduce the angle of the slope. The area will then be seeded to further stabilize the soil and prevent erosion. Two new gun racks will also be built and installed to finish the current improvements to the skeet and sporting clays ranges.

**(2) Roof Repairs and Replacement:** Replace roofs on the clubhouse, trap houses and skeet houses. Roofs on the clubhouse and skeet houses are shingled and will be re-shingled. The trap houses will get the addition of concrete roofs.

**(3) Install Handicap Ramp:** Current handicap ramp at the clubhouse has deteriorated and a new ramp will be built of concrete.

**11. List any Other Local, State, or Federal Agency that has Overlapping or Additional Jurisdiction:**

(a) **Permits, Licenses and/or Authorizations:**

<b>Agency Name</b>	<b>Permit</b>
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None

**Funding:**

<b>Agency Name</b>	<b>Funding Amount</b>
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Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks	\$17,694.50
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**12. Affiliations, Cooperating Agencies, User Groups and/or Supporting Groups:** The club hosts two annual trap shoots and a “fun” shoot for young shooters. The range also hosts a summer trap and skeet league. Additionally the range is used by both the Boy Scouts and local Hunter Education classes. In addition to the regular members, there are approximately 100 other guest shooters per year at the range.

**13. History of the Planning and Scoping Process, and Any Public Involvement:** Proposed range improvements and safety enhancements had been discussed within the membership of the club and with the associated project vendors and contractors.

**14. List of Agencies Consulted/Contacted During Preparation of the EA:**

- Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

**15. Name, Address and Phone Number of Project Sponsor:**

Clay Anderson  
P.O. Box 805  
Colstrip, MT 59323  
740-0395  
blacklab@tctwest.net

**16. Other Pertinent Information:**

Shooting range applications require the participant's governing body to approve by resolution its submission of applications for shooting range funding assistance. Resolution Date: January 15, 2007.

## PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

**Abbreviated Checklist** - The degree and intensity determines extent of Environmental Review. An abbreviated checklist may be used for those projects that are not complex, controversial, or are not in environmental sensitive areas)

**Table 1. Potential impact on physical environment.**

Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:	Unknown	Potentially Significant	Minor	None	Can Be Mitigated	Comments Below
1. Unique, endangered, fragile, or limited environmental resources				<b>X</b>		
2. Terrestrial or aquatic life and/or habitats				<b>X</b>		<b>#2</b>
3. Introduction of new species into an area				<b>X</b>		
4. Vegetation cover, quantity & quality				<b>X</b>		
5. Water quality, quantity & distribution (surface or groundwater)				<b>X</b>		<b>#5</b>
6. Existing water right or reservation				<b>X</b>		
7. Geology & soil quality, stability & moisture				<b>X</b>		<b>#7</b>
8. Air quality or objectionable odors				<b>X</b>		
9. Historical & archaeological sites				<b>X</b>		
10. Demands on environmental resources of land, water, air & energy				<b>X</b>		
11. Aesthetics				<b>X</b>		

**Comments** (A description of potentially significant, or unknown, impacts and potential alternatives for mitigation must be provided.)

**2. & 5.** There are no delineated wetlands or natural water sources within the area proposed for development. Castle Rock Lake is immediately to the southwest, but the shot fall area is in the opposite direction.

**7.** Soil disruption for this site is very localized. Erosion control measures are in effect and disturbed areas are to be reseeded.

**Table 2. Potential impacts on human environment.**

Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:	Unknown	Potentially Significant	Minor	None	Can Be Mitigated	Comments Below
1. Social structures and cultural diversity				<b>X</b>		
2. Changes in existing public benefits provided by wildlife populations and/or habitat				<b>X</b>		
3. Local and state tax base and tax revenue				<b>X</b>		
4. Agricultural production				<b>X</b>		
5. Human health				<b>X</b>		<b>#5</b>
6. Quantity & distribution of community & personal income				<b>X</b>		
7. Access to & quality of recreational activities				<b>X</b>		<b>#7</b>
8. Locally adopted environmental plans & goals (ordinances)				<b>X</b>		
9. Distribution & density of population and housing				<b>X</b>		<b>#9</b>
10. Demands for government services				<b>X</b>		
11. Industrial and/or commercial activity				<b>X</b>		

**Comments** (A description of potentially significant, or unknown, impacts and potential alternatives for mitigation must be provided.)

**5.** Range site plans, construction and the ongoing operational and maintenance plans meet the standards of safety for the range participants and the public at large.

**7.** Range will provide year round controlled access and fulfils a need for a range to accommodate law enforcement training, hunter education, bow-hunter safety, and public shooting.

**9.** This is a rural area with a low population density and the trap club is located in a recreational area, with a recreational area on Castle Rock Lake, Bike path to the south, the Colstrip Gun Club to the east and an Archery Range to the west.

### **Part III. Environmental Consequences**

**Does the proposed action involve potential risks or adverse effects which are uncertain but extremely harmful if they were to occur?** No

**Does the proposed action have impacts that are individually minor, but cumulatively significant or potentially significant?** No

**Identification of the Preferred Alternatives:**

- **Alternative A** is as described in paragraph 10 (Description of Project)
  - (1) Improvement of skeet and sporting clays ranges
  - (2) Make needed roof repairs and replacements
  - (3) Install a handicapped ramp
- **Alternative B (No Action Alternative)** area will remain as an active shooting range without improvements to the ranges, roof repairs or replacement of the handicapped ramp.

**Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the no action alternative) to the proposed action whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider and a discussion of how the alternatives would be implemented:**

Two alternatives have been considered, A (Proposed Alternative) and B (No Action Alternative). There were no other alternatives that were deemed reasonably available, nor prudent.

Neither the proposed alternative (A) nor the no action alternative (B) would have any significant negative environmental or potentially negative consequences.

- There are beneficial consequences for the acceptance of alternatives A to Improve shooting sports opportunities, and to provide improved safety and security.
- The No Action Alternative would be not to improve the range and continue on with present shooting activities without increased shooting opportunities and improved safety. Land use would remain the same. Therefore the proposed alternative is the prudent alternative.

**Describe any Alternatives considered and eliminated from Detailed Study:**

None

**List and explain proposed mitigative measures (stipulations):**

None

**Individuals or groups contributing to, or commenting on, this EA:**

Montana Fish, Wildlife, & Parks  
Clay Anderson, P.O. Box 805, Colstrip, MT 59323

#### **PART IV. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT**

All of the pertinent or potential impacts of the project have been reviewed, discussed, and analyzed. None of the projects reviewed were complex, controversial, or located in an environmentally sensitive area. The projects being proposed are on properties owned by PPL Montana and leased by the Spec Willis Trap Club. The proposed low impact activities and the increased recreational opportunities offered, indicates that this should be considered the final version of this environmental assessment. There are no significant environmental or economic impacts associated with the proposed alternative (A). The 24 year history of Colstrip Trap Club also known as the Spec Willis Trap Club, providing extensive recreational opportunities to its members and the public, indicates support for the proposed alternative. Therefore, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks should approve the proposed alternative (A) for improvements to the Spec Willis Trap Club as outlined in para. 2 & 10.

**EA prepared by:** GENE R. HICKMAN  
Ecological Assessments  
Helena, MT 59602

**Date Completed:** August 2, 2007

#### **PART V. EA CONCLUSION SECTION**

**Recommendation and justification concerning preparation of EIS:**

None Required

**Describe public involvement, if any:**

None